

Augmentation Funding for Online Education

You may have heard that the state legislature approved \$35 million in one-time augmentation funding for the development of online programming as part of the 2018-2019 budget. The purpose of this document is to clarify any confusion surrounding the augmentation.

To begin with, the augmentation is completely separate from the funds allocated for the development of a new, fully online college. In contrast, it will be disbursed through the Online Education Initiative (OEI) and is intended to fund a competitive grant program for the existing colleges to address near-term workforce development needs through the development of online education programs. A second goal is to support students from the fully online college who want to continue their studies at one of the existing 114 colleges.

Edited excerpt from 2018-2019 State Budget:

An increase of \$35 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund for community college districts to:

1. Develop online programs and courses that lead to short-term, industry-valued credentials, or
2. Enable a student enrolled in a pathway developed by the California Online Community College to seek continued education through pathways offered by an existing community college.

The OEI is currently working with the Chancellor's Office to develop a strategic plan for the administration of the grant. We anticipate that proposals from the campuses will be solicited in early 2019. As part of that planning effort, OEI is currently talking with stakeholders across the community college system to gather input that will inform the strategic plan. We will be seeking to gain a deeper understanding of current credentialing programs, identify gaps, and solicit ideas around how the funding can be utilized most effectively.

Based on these conversations and others, OEI will develop detailed criteria for the grant proposal and selection process. The goal is to disburse a series of targeted grants that cohesively fit together for maximum impact. For now, here are some initial assumptions:

- Grants will be made directly to either colleges or districts.
- Grant money can go toward the development of online curriculum itself or toward shared services that support the effort to expand online programming.
- Priority will be given to programs that have a measurable and near-term impact.
- Collaboration across colleges and districts is likely to be important.
- OEI will seek to strike a balance between the articulated goals of the augmentation across the portfolio of grant projects.

We have included some frequently asked questions on the other side of this document, based on the conversations that we have had so far. We will continue to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible throughout the planning process so that we design this program to be as beneficial as possible to the campuses and the students. Please feel free to contact O'Neal Spicer with MindWires at oneal@mindwires.com / 650.400.9466 or Jory Hadsell, OEI Executive Director, at jhadsell@ccconlineed.org to share feedback or ask questions related to the augmentation funding.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Who are the intended recipients of the augmentation funding? The funding is intended to be spent by the existing colleges and districts.

What are the goals of the augmentation funding? There are two distinct goals. One is to fund online programming, support services and infrastructure that increase the availability and accessibility of workforce preparedness training. The second goal to provide pathways for students who have completed coursework at the new online college to continue their studies at one of the existing 114 community colleges.

What is the relationship between the augmentation funds and the newly funded online college?

The California Online Community College is a separate initiative from the Online Education Initiative (OEI). This augmentation funding, to be disbursed and managed via the OEI, is intended to expand access to existing online programs leading to industry valued credentials and to complement the online college by creating onramps for students in the online college to continue their education at one of the existing community colleges.

What is the role of the OEI in the augmentation funding? The OEI has been asked to lead the process for soliciting grant proposals and selecting grant recipients to ensure cohesion with other online efforts. Currently, the OEI is engaged in developing a strategic plan for the disbursement of funds and metrics to measure outcomes.

Who is MindWires and what is their role in this process? MindWires is a strategy consultancy with deep experience in higher education, particularly with regard to the use of educational technology to support teaching and learning. They are assisting OEI with the development of a strategic funding plan and selection protocols for the grant.

What is the timeline for soliciting proposals and selecting grant recipients? The strategic funding plan will be in place by late Fall 2018. It is expected that applications will be solicited and grants awarded in 2019.

Do you anticipate a handful of large grants or a larger number of small grants? Decisions have not yet been made around the number or size of grants. The strategic funding plan will address this concern.

What are some of the key features the Chancellor's Office would like to see linked to program activities?

Grant-funded college activities should align with Chancellor's Office priorities such as: supporting guided pathways online; re-envisioning student on-boarding into online programs, including development of processes that can be replicated across districts to recognize credit for prior learning (including micro-credentials, certifications, or other means); clear linkage of coursework or learning activities to industry credentials and employment; deploying the OEI Peer Online Course Review process locally; focus on developing processes or solutions that can be replicated in the future by other districts; planning for sustainability of activities once the grant funds have been exhausted; and sharing information or content developed through the Vision Resource Center.

How will grant proposals be evaluated? Details are still being worked out but the following criteria are among those likely to be considered:

- » Collaborative nature of the proposal across colleges and districts.
- » Time to market or how soon will students see tangible benefits from the proposed grant activity.
- » Potential for broad impact across multiple regions.
- » Does the grant tackle previously identified needs or gaps in existing programs Is there a high probability of employment once a student completes the program?

Who actually applies for the grants? The funds are intended to be spent by colleges and districts and it is anticipated that grants will originate at the college or district levels. Regional entities can certainly play a facilitator role in encouraging colleges and districts in their network to apply for funding and assist in the development of grant proposals.